T. Hanbury

26977

THE

# NATURAL HISTORY

OF

# Northampton-ſhire;

WITH

Some ACCOUNT of the

# ANTIQUITIES.

To which is Annex'd

A TRANSCRIPT of *DOOMSDAY-BOOK*, ſo far as it relates to That COUNTY.

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By *JOHN MORTON*, M. A.

Rector of *Oxendon* in the ſame County, and Fellow of the ROYAL SOCIETY: Formerly of *Emanuel-College* in *Cambridge*.

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Μηδὲν ἁμαρτεῖν περὶ Θεῶν, καὶ πάντα καλῶς.

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LONDON:

Printed for R. KNAPLOCK at the *Biſhop's-Head*, and R. WILKIN at the *King's-Head*, in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. M DCC XII.

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Quantity of a ſubtiler and purer Igneous Matter, as the Heat which is diſcharg'd out of the Earth at the Time of *Earthquakes* educes and bears up along with it ſuch a Quantity of ſeveral Kinds of Mineral Matter, as to thicken, diſcolour, and darken the Atmoſphere. * That theſe unwonted *Illuminations* appertain to the Igneous Tribe of *Meteors*, appears by ſeveral Circumſtanees, and particularly by that of the Eruption of Flames from out of the Black Clouds. And to me they ſeem conſtituted of a thin and diſperſed Collection of the Parts of Fire, of Quantity and Strength ſufficient to enlighten the Air, eſpecially if ſerene and clear; tho' not to heat it ſo, that the Senſes can diſcover any more than an ordinary Warmth in it, tho' perhaps a Thermometer might.

* *Vid.* Dr. *Woodward's* Nat. Hiſt. of the Earth, p. 202.

52. As to the Reports we have had of ſtrange Appearances of *Military Skirmiſhes* in the Air, or of Armies of Aerial Warriours diſputing in Battel-Array for Victory, and particularly that in the Fen-Countrey nigh *Peterborough* the Year before the Revolution; I ſhould ſcarce have taken notice of them, had they not been ſo ſeriouſly mention'd by ſome of our Old Hiſtorians; and had they not of late impos'd upon ſome of better Rank than the Vulgar. Thoſe in the Fen-Countrey, who ſay they were Spectators of this ſtrange Prodigy, peradventure ſaw a great many ſmall Clouds of uncouth Shapes, from which there flaſh'd out Lightning, and now and then they heard a Thunder-Crack. This 'tis likely was the whole of the Matter, and all the reſt the Product of their own Superſtitious Imaginations. That Relation in *Ingulphus* of the miraculous Cloud about the Sun, that appear'd as they were carrying the Body of *Alsford* the Bayliff of the Church of *Crowland* to be buried at *Burgh*, that is, *Peterborough*, I take to be of much the ſame Stamp and Authority with the abovemention'd.

53. I now paſs on to the *Igneous* Meteors of a yet lower Elevation in the Atmoſphere, ſuch as paſs by the Name of *Ignes Fatui*; which are not unfrequently ſeen with us in the Meadows on the Banks of the River *Nyne*; alſo in the Valleys on the Sides of our leſſer Brooks, and over Moory and Boggy Places; ſometimes Three or Four at once. They uſually ſtart up as it were on the ſudden from the Meadow, Moor, or Bog; and as ſuddenly diſappear. The Form of them is various and uncertain. Some of them are compoſed in a conglobated Form. Others are bracteated, or appear like Sheets of Flame. Several ſuch have been ſeen to iſſue forth of the Bogs in *Naſeby* Field, and to roll away very ſpeedily and ſwiftly. Others of them are of a Cylindric Shape, or approaching to it. One of this Figure about Four or Five Yards in Length, a Foot in Diameter, Mr. *Kirkham* obſerved at *Calvey-Bridge* not far from *Cliff*. They are generally in Motion; the Motion of them very quick and very irregular. The Duration of them is alſo uncertain. Sometimes they are broken as it were, but without any noiſe, into a Thouſand little Parcels like to Sparks of Fire, and ſo go out. Sometimes they are almoſt ſevered in the middle, and unite again, and riſe and fall from

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from the Moor or Bog, as it were the Light of a Candle that is gliding up and down the Wieck and juſt expiring. Sometimes they go out with an offenſive fætid Smell. Oftentimes they are ſeen to ariſe from moiſt Moory Grounds by the Sides of our Brooks and Rivers, and glide down with the Stream, as for Inſtance, that of the River *Nyne*; and this for ſeveral Miles; the Air which touches the Surface of the Water having uſually a Motion directed the ſame way as the Current is, and carrying the *Ignes Fatui* along with it.

54. The Places where theſe *Meteors* ordinarily appear, do pretty plainly indicate that this Meteor is form'd of a Fat or Oleoſe and Inflammable Matter of the ſame kind with what we find in form of a little Skin or Cream upon the Surface of little Watery Puddles in almoſt every Bog, and in Mooriſh Meadows, if any Holes of Standing Water are there. They moſt frequently appear in the Autumn Months, the Heats at that Time of the Year being not ſo great as to hurry the Matter that forms this Meteor up into the Atmoſphere, as it does in the Hotter Months. For the ſame Reaſon it is that this ſort of Meteor appears only in the Night. No doubt the ſame ſort of Igneous Matter ariſes from the Moor as well in the Day-time as in the Night; but in the Day-time the Heat is ſuch, that it is diſſipated and born off, and is not permitted to aſſemble and convene, as in the Cool of the Night.

55. As to the *Lambent Lights* or Fires, as they are called, which are ſometimes ſeen upon the Bodies of Animals, and particularly of Horſes, and which moſt Writers have plac'd under the Head of Meteors, in my Opinion they do not belong to it. They appear to me to be conſtituted of the Igneous Effluvia, may I ſo expreſs it, of Animal Bodies, which upon a particular Diſpoſition of the Ambient Air become viſible in form of Light or Flame. That there is a Luminous Matter in the Blood and the Recrements of the Blood, particularly the Urine, the *Phoſphorus* diſtill'd from thence evinces. The Sweat of ſome Scorbutical Perſons, of thoſe eſpecially who have drank very freely of ſtrong and ſpirituous Liquors, has been frequently attended with the like Luminous Affection: And that ſuch ſort of Lights or Fires have exhal'd from the Bodies of ſeveral Animals, eſpecially upon rubbing or chafing them, is a known Obſervation. Upon Horſes, which are fat and foggy, being curried or rubbed after hard working, there has often been obſerved a faint fleeting Flame, and eſpecially about their Hanches. A Gentleman of *Wellingborough* in a ſhowry dark Evening 1702, as he was returning homewards from *Caſtle-Aſhby*, had his Horſes Ears as it were tipp'd with Fire, which continued there the ſpace of a Furlong's Riding. He frequently drove off the Light with his Hand, but this would not quite extinguiſh it. 'Tis only ſuch as theſe that the Writers of *Meteors* have intituled *Ignes Lambentes*, and have plac'd under the Head of Meteors. They are ſeldom or never obſerved, but upon ſome brisk Agitation of the Blood of the Animal Body upon which they hover: Upon that Agitation, the ſubtiler and lighter Parts of the

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